

CHILD SAFETY POLICY (STANDARD TWO)

Introduction

St Mary MacKillop Catholic Primary School is committed to providing a safe environment for all students and young people and takes active steps to protect them against abuse. To achieve this the school has developed and actively enforces Child Safety Strategies to ensure that any person involved in 'child connected work' is aware of their obligations & responsibilities for ensuring the safety of all children under their care.

In accordance with requirements of the [Victorian Government's Ministerial Order No 870](#), St Mary MacKillop Catholic Primary School maintains a culture of 'no tolerance' to child abuse and to support this has established minimum Child Safety Standards.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate St Mary MacKillop Catholic Primary School's commitment to ensuring Child Safety and to illustrate the measures implemented by the school to maintain a safe education environment, as well as processes for responding to suspected abuse.

Scope

This policy and associated procedures, apply to all staff members (teaching & non-teaching), clergy, casual relief staff, volunteers, and contractors engaged by the school.

Commitment to Child Safety

All students & young people attending St Mary MacKillop Catholic Primary School have the right to feel safe. The school affirms its commitment to child safety by adopting a 'zero tolerance' to child abuse and by actively implementing and managing strategies to help protect children from harm.

Initiatives undertaken to ensure the safety of students and young people at St Mary MacKillop Catholic Primary School include the following:

- » An annual assessment of the effectiveness of its Child Safety Management Strategies to identify areas for improvement.
- » A Code of Conduct defining workplace expectations including professional boundaries, ethical behaviours and acceptable & unacceptable relationships of everyone connected with child related work.
- » Processes for the recruitment, support, training & supervision of staff members, clergy, casual relief staff, volunteers, and contractors who participate in 'Child Connected Work'.
- » Procedures for responding to and reporting suspected Child Abuse.
- » Inclusion & empowerment of all students & young people in the establishment of Child Safety strategies.
- » A commitment that promotes safety of Indigenous children, children with disabilities and those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.

St Mary MacKillop Catholic Primary School maintains policies, procedures and strategies to create a child safe environment in the following areas.

Risk Management

St Mary MacKillop Catholic Primary School recognises the importance of minimising the potential of Child Abuse or harm and uses this process to inform our policies, procedures and activity planning. In addition to general Occupational Health & Safety risks the school proactively manages risk via a formal assessment process.

Code of Conduct

St Mary MacKillop Catholic Primary School enforces a Code of Conduct for all staff members, clergy, casual relief teachers, volunteers, and contractors that clearly defines workplace expectations including professional boundaries, ethical behaviours and acceptable & unacceptable relationships.

This Code of Conduct aims to provide guidance and support to individuals so that they feel valued, respected and fairly treated. It is provided to any person engaged in 'Child Connected Work' and is available on the school website & in the Employee Handbook.

Recruitment, Support, Training & Supervision

St Mary MacKillop Catholic Primary School adopts Administrative & Human Resource practices to ensure its screening, recruitment & performance management processes identify and engage the most suitable candidates for positions available at the school. Recruitment and screening processes, as well as Police and Working With Children's Checks are minimum requirements for those engaged in 'Child Connected Work'.

Staff Members are provided with regular development opportunities, support, supervision & training to assist with addressing child safety matters.

Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Concerns or Abuse

St Mary MacKillop Catholic Primary School has appointed a **Child Safety Officer, Tarah Ortiz**, with specific responsibilities for responding to reports or complaints made by any member of the school community relating to child safety concerns or abuse. The school's Child Safety Officer works closely with members of the leadership team, staff members, clergy, casual relief teachers, volunteers, contractors, students and the parent community to ensure Child Safety Standards are maintained and all child safety complaints, suspected abuse, disclosures or breaches of the Child Safety Code of Conduct are immediately addressed.

Where staff members have significant concerns for the wellbeing of a student or young person they are mandated by law to report their concerns immediately to the Principal, Child Safety Officer or a Members of the Leadership Team before contacting DHHS Child Protection. Staff members will be supported through all aspects of the reporting process.

The school's reporting & complaints procedure will be located on the school website.

Inclusion & empowerment of all students & young people

St Mary MacKillop Catholic Primary School works with students to ensure that they are empowered to understand their rights, recognise what abuse is and encourage them to speak up when they feel uncomfortable or afraid. Staff members actively encourages students & young people to express their views on matters that directly affect them. The school educates students and young people on strategies they can adopt if they feel unsafe.

Valuing Diversity

St Mary MacKillop Catholic Primary School values diversity and does not tolerate discriminatory practices.

To achieve this the school:

- » Promotes the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Indigenous children and their families.
- » Promotes the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from cultural and/or linguistically different backgrounds.
- » Welcome children with disabilities and their families and actively promotes their participation.
- » Seek to employ staff members from a culturally diverse background.

Review of this Policy

St Mary MacKillop Catholic Primary School reviews its Child Safety Code of Conduct every three years more frequently in the event of a complaint or when there has been a change to the work environment or work arrangements that may impact on the protection of children.

Next Policy Review is 2021

